DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 417 CE 055 855

TITLE The Quest for a Vision. A Roundtable Focused on "Collaboration, Not Competition" Convened by the Michigan Association for Career Education, April 1987-May 1989.
INSTITUTION Michigan Association for Career Education.
PUB DATE 89
NOTE 12p.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavioral Objectives; Educational Change; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Needs; *Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Futures (of Society); *Lifelong Learning; Models; Postsecondary Education

ABSTRACT

Through a series of workshops and meetings held in Michigan during the 2 years from April 1987 to May 1989, leaders from the fields of education, government, and business developed a consensus around a "Quest for a Vision"--a scenario focused on winning in which education has been completely integrated into all aspects of society's behavior and is accepted as a lifelong process. The work was done with reference to two models--an expectation model and a behaviorist model. In the expectation model, which was used to organize thinking about getting ready for the future, the critical ingredients for success included opportunity, preparation, and expectation. The behaviorist model stems from behaviorism but with significant differences. It proposes the idea of a self-perpetuating cycle consisting of an information base, leading to assumptions, leading to behavior, leading to results/experience, and finally to refinement of the information base. To identify the information and assumptions which must be created to produce a new behavior, desired behaviors are categorized as behaviors that: (1) describe a society in which all segments and stakeholders are effectively integrated; (2) characterize a society in which there is acceptance and support for multiple roles; (3) recognize and support the concept of education as a lifelong process; and (4) are a consequence of an effective system of testing and rewards driving the educational process. Action plans stemming from these models include effective publicizing and promoting of the vision, identification of a champion who would commit to preparing action plans to bring about the desired behavior, and creation of a body committed to providing coordination. The next step in the process involves taking the plan from the conceptual stages to action to improve behavior. (KC)

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THE QUEST FOR A VISION

A Roundtable Focused On

"Collaboration, Not Competition"

convened by

THE MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION FOR CAREER EDUCATION

April 1987 - May 1989

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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A SELECT ROUNDTABLE CONVENED BY THE

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION FOR CAREER EDUCATION

A VISION OF TOMORROW'S EDUCATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

In April, 1987, M.A.C.E. invited a prestigious group of leaders in Michigan's education community to form a Roundtable to discuss Dan Russie's keynote address on the *Workplace of the Future* at the 17th Annual Michigan Career Development Association Spring Conference.

We found ourselves starting on a QUEST - a quest for a vision.

Our vision covers the entire range of development within the society of the future. It will require participation by parents, learners, educators, leaders from the elected and business segments - in short - a total societal effort.

We began to understand that the VISION drives the QUEST and the QUEST refines the VISION. We needed to expand the Roundtable to embrace a full cross section of the society we are visioning. Therefore, we invited others to join us on our QUEST.

We were guided in our quest by Dan Russie, with extensive experience and understanding in the strategic process, gained through his roles as Assistant Controller of Maccabees Life Insurance Company and as Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Management Forum.

Our quest not only produced a statement of vision which we present for your participation. It also resulted in an understanding of the vision driven strategic process.

We offer a vision for our future society and for the education process within it. We believe that the scenario this vision describes can be achieved within our time and capabilities.

We are aware that other scenarios, most of which are far less desirable, could emerge. In fact, there are presently more forces taking us away from the direction needed for achievement of our vision than toward it.

This leads us to the realization that we cannot passively wait for the vision scenario to "burst" upon us and then have our plans in place to accommodate it. The vision scenario will not come into being without effective intervention from each of us. We have to want that scenario and then look upon differences between any present condition and where we want to be, not as a barrier, but as a milestone we are confident we will pass in our movement in the desired direction.

THE VISION SCENARIO

We have a vision of Winning: where education has been completely integrated into all aspects of society's behavior and is accepted as a lifelong process. The educational professionals are providing indispensible leadership in creating and accommodating a vision scenario in which:

- An understanding and acceptance of multiple roles, values and "employments" allows all members of our society to be productive, satisfied and to have dignity.
- We have learned the power of cooperation, rather than competition, to produce "win-win" results. We are skilled in expanding opportunities and in converting perceived competitors into strategic partners.
- An understanding of technology, its applications and the nature of the worker in a technologically-enhanced environment has leveraged our resources to victory over the environment and man's perceived limitations.
- The United States, and particularly the Great Lakes Region, uses this leverage to provide exceptional contributions within a global economic system which provides desirable lifestyles for all.
- Our society is sufficiently in agreement with and committed to this vision to focus its energies and resources on bringing it about and sustaining it.

THE PROCESS

In a series of workshops, leaders from the fields of education, government and the business community have developed a consensus around that vision scenario. Agreement was reached on the behaviors that would be necessary to its achievement, and consequential from its realization. We worked with reference to two models - an Expectation Model and a Behaviorist Model.

EXPECTATION MODEL

In this model which was used to organize thinking about getting ready for the future, the critical ingredients for success included:

- **opportunity**
- **preparation**
- **expectation**

If any of these is absent, the problem is worsened, even if we are successful in changing or "improving" any of the others.

If we increase opportunity by creating new jobs or industries, but have not increased the preparation of the potential workers, they will find themselves even more on the outside looking in.

If we do not increase the expectation that we can be successful, we will not motivate all segments of our society to make the efforts to prepare themselves. This is especially true for minorities.

If we somehow manage to increase the expectation and the preparation, but not the opportunities, we create an unacceptable risk of deep seated disillusionment with potentially catastrophic social implications.

BEHAVIORIST MODEL

This model has its roots in behaviorism, but with some significant differences. The consultant thinks of it as "reductionist behaviorism." Other experts have labeled it "cognitive behaviorism."

In this model, we systematically attempt to step back from the more observable (but usually consequential) to the elements which trigger those observables.

At the upper end of observable sits results. These are scrap rates, test results, pass/fail, etc. Results spring from behavior. That is why it is futile to address problems at the results level. Results are only a consequence of behavior, therefore, change the behavior and the results will change.

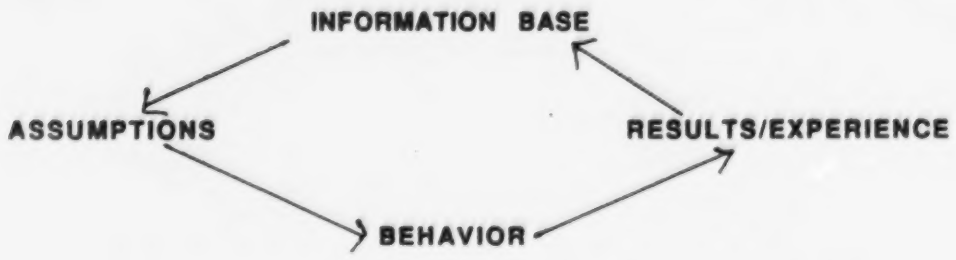
However, behavior is not perfectly efficient. The results which are actually produced are not always what the behavior intended. There are accidental results, and there is inefficient behavior. Since behavior isn't entirely efficient, we have to look beyond mere behavior. Furthermore, behavior is notoriously hard to change directly. In this model, we next look at assumptions.

Most people behave with rational purpose. Their behavior flows from their sets of assumptions about what should happen and what it takes to make it happen. If we can make the assumptions more "acceptable," we can accept the randomness of behavior or the results.

We also know that assumptions are based on the accumulation and processing of information. This is not a perfectly efficient engine either, but it is the earliest opportunity to work on the model before one makes a serious investment in personality or ego involvement on the part of the behaver.

Information is produced by external stimuli, presented as results of behavior by each of us. We can see this as a self perpetuating cycle which is apparent in Figure 1.

Figure 1



To most effectively change behavior, and the consequential results, we must intervene in the cycle. The group accepted the belief that the place to intervene is at the information level.

We must study and more clearly understand how information is acquired and processed into assumptions (isn't that education?). Then we need to identify and understand what different information is appropriate for the results we want to see accomplished.

In the workshop sessions during 1988, we employed brainstorming and consensus techniques to identify a wide array of behaviors and characteristics which would have to exist in order for the vision scenario to come to pass. While these arose spontaneously, they do not always lend themselves to precise classification.

However, to facilitate the next step, which is to identify the information and assumptions which must be created to produce the new behavior, we have categorized these brainstormed behaviors into four general areas.

1. Behaviors which describe a society in which all segments and stakeholders are effectively integrated.

2. Behaviors which characterize a society in which there is acceptance and support for multiple roles.

3. Behaviors which recognize and support the concept of education as a lifelong process, rather than a K-12 finite experience.

4. Behaviors and characteristics which are a consequence of an effective system of testing and rewards driving the educational process.

On the following pages, we present those highlight behaviors. Our next step was to identify programs and potential "program champions" which will produce the drivers (assumptions, information) to generate those behaviors.

1. Behaviors which describe a society in which all segments and stakeholders are effectively integrated

a. Applied education (integration and articulation with total society) is practiced.

b. Business and industry accepts a significant role and responsibility in the process of training and education.

c. Education is more tightly integrated with all other societal processes.

d. Education has accepted its role in relationship to the greater society.

e. We are skilled and effective as politicians and are enjoying it.

f. Funding methods no longer present barriers to cooperative processes, innovative programs and shared decision-making.

g. There is a harmony among Expectation, Opportunity and Preparation.

h. All societal processes, including education, do an effective job of identifying and including stakeholders in defining and carrying them out.

j. We have reconciled the tension between our vision of cooperation and the need to be competitive in our marketplaces.

k. We are exhibiting the more patient and sustained behavior which characterizes a more "mature" society.

l. We don't sacrifice the dreams and energies of adolescence as we mature as a society.

m. We effectively accept and deal with the diverse values and approaches our varied society produces.

2. **Behaviors which characterize a society in which there is acceptance and support for multiple roles**

   a. There is a more dynamic definition of roles in the education process.

   b. New concepts are provided as to what represents "dignity" and "human worth."

   c. All who are involved in the education process are regarded as "educators" rather than being categorized as "teachers," "support staff" and "administrators."

   d. All students will be:
      - respected as individuals
      - treated with dignity
      - given help as needed

   e. We understand the education process in terms of who is the "customer" and who is the "buyer" and how roles shift (who am I today?).

3. **Behaviors which recognize and support the concept of education as a lifelong process, rather than a K-12 finite experience**

   a. Nurturing and preschool are more integrated into the process.

   b. There is more flexibility and integration in the delivery of education:
      . Adults "dropping in"and "out" of day school programs ("stop outs," not "drop outs").
      . Students leaving school to work and returning to complete or extend education.

   c. We have techniques in place to take people from wherever they are to wherever they have to (want to) go.

   d. We understand that education is a process, not just the acquisition of finite skills (however, we still need skills).

4. **Behaviors and characteristics which are a consequence of an effective system of testing and rewards driving the educational process**

   a. There is a well understood reward system within the education process (what's in it for me?).

   b. We have found ways to value, measure, support and reward skill in the delivery and acquisition of education within the process.

   c. The types of behavior(s) needed for societal success is understood and is consistently encouraged and rewarded throughout the education process.

   d. "Employability" skills definition and testing has effectively defined the success characteristics within the vision scenario.

   e. "Employability" is understood as an array of proven success characteristics.

   f. Our education process achieves pragmatic validity by effectively defining outcomes needed under a consensus-achieved scenario. Outcomes are defined as:
      . competencies
      . skill sets
      . culturization
      . other (to be defined)

g. Testing (in some form or another) is able to reliably quantify the delivery, acquisition and possession of specific valued skills and attributes.

h. Testing is seen, not as an end in itself, but as one tool in data gather - gathered for the purpose of providing direction to programs and to the individuals within them.

i. We have resolved the difficult questions which commonly surround the issue of testing:
. who is using the tests?
. who is being measured? the individual? the process? both?

By the time the Roundtable met on January 27, 1989, the focus had changed to a search for action plans. The participants structured this search in terms of required outcomes, which were defined as:

1. Effective publicizing and promotion of the vision and its elements.

2. Identification of "Champion" (either individual or organization) who would commit to preparing action plans designed to bring about the desired behavior.

3. Creation of a body committed to providing coordination and/or oversight.

Different approaches would have to be developed and followed to achieve each of these outcomes. This now represented the task which lay before the Roundtable.

The promotion and publicizing effort will involve such steps as:

** Informal market research with professional organizations, Career Education Advisory Commission, State Board, etc., to test acceptance and interest in the vision.
** Meet with the State Board of Education and the Career Education Advisory Commission to explain and promote the process and results of the Roundtable and to sell the resulting vision.
** Print the findings in a format easily distributed to the public we want to involve in the quest.

The function of coordination and oversight would fit well into the "Strike the Flint" role and concept presented to and approved by the MACE leadership at the Ninth Annual Conference in September 1987.

The third outcome was the identification and recruitment of "champions" to develop and execute the plans required to make the vision come to pass. This became the task for the balance of the January 27 meeting and for the sessions to follow.

The process of identifying plan/program champions began with determining the critical questions which must be answered.

1. Referring to the desired behaviors identified in the previous sessions, what generic action plans might be successful in bringing those behaviors about?

2. If plans like those were to be undertaken, what are the characteristics of champion(s) who could be effective?

3. How could we attract such champions and persuade them to take on the task?

To begin the process of finding these answers, the Roundtable established four focus areas:

I. INTEGRATION OF EFFORTS
This relates to the behaviors which describe a society in which all segments and stakeholders are effectively integrated.

II. ACCEPTANCE/SUPPORT OF MULTIPLE ROLES
This relates to the behaviors which characterize a society in which there is acceptance and support for multiple roles.

III. LIFELONG PROCESS OF EDUCATION
This relates to the behaviors which recognize and support the concept of education as a lifelong process, rather than a K-12 finite experience.

IV. EFFECTIVE TESTING AND REWARD SYSTEMS
This relates to the behaviors and characteristics which are a consequence of an effective system of testing and rewards driving the educational process.

In the balance of the day long January 27 session, the Roundtable participants formed into focus groups to develop generic plans and suggestive lists of people or organizations who might fit the role of champion for each set of behaviors.

GROUP I. - INTEGRATION OF EFFORTS

DESCRIPTIVE GENERIC PLANS

1. Establish communications between labor unions and colleagues in the education community. This will involve a very large number of groups.
2. Establish a common set of values and ethics among all the publics. Work towards the incorporation of a shared vision.
3. Develop effectiveness in the process of consensus among all of the stakeholders.
4. Improve the adaptability of structures and individuals impacting the effectiveness of the process.
5. Develop an acceptance of "risk behavior" - establish an environment in which there are no penalties for "failures."

POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS

1. D. Bemis, Superintendent of Education
2. UAW, MEA
3. Business and Industry Associations or Individual Companies
4. Chambers of Commerce
5. Parents
6. Existing Partnerships and Focus Groups
7. Media - with their access to the public
8. Legislators at all levels
9. Consumers - students, taxpayers, others

GROUP II. - ACCEPTANCE/SUPPORT OF MULTIPLE ROLES

DESCRIPTIVE GENERIC PLANS

1. Develop the ability to understand and remain mindful of the focus and purpose of each group.

2. Obtain commitment of each group solicited to understand and respect the concepts of the vision and the process.

3. Establish respect for, and credibility and continuity of each group involved in the process.

4. Develop understanding and acceptance of differences, such as:
   . physical differences ("too" tall, short, ugly, pretty)
   . recognition of values in various "levels" of employment (eg, entry level to executive level, permanent level to intermittent level)
   . age

POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS

1. Unions (MEA, MFT)
2. Existing special interest groups (handicapped, minorities)
3. State Board of Education
4. Roundtable of Christians and Jews
5. Political Parties
6. Churches
7. Media

GROUP III - LIFELONG PROCESS OF EDUCATION

DESCRIPTIVE GENERIC PLANS

1. Establish Legislative Mandates.

2. Develop and communicate the understanding that this is not optional - it has become an economic and survival necessity.

3. Work with the agencies and organizations in the stakeholder community to persuade and help them modify their goals and objectives in order to incorporate them into the vision.

POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS

1. Home (PTA)
2. Media
3. Operation Headstart
4. Within the Education Infrastructure:
   . ISDs
   . Universities, Community Colleges
   . Local School Boards
   . Adult/Community Education
5. UAW - GM, Ford, Chrysler
6. Political Thrusts:
   . Governor's Office
   . Human Investment Fund
   . Michigan Opportunity Card
   . State Board of Education
   . Local School Boards
7. Chamber(s) of Commerce
8. Churches
9. Media

GROUP IV - EFFECTIVE TESTING AND REWARD SYSTEMS

DESCRIPTIVE GENERIC PLANS

1. Improvements in testing programs:

   a) Reconcile present testing programs with current concerns and with proposed plans.

   b) Develop "hands-on" testing programs.

   c) Develop cooperative group tests.

2. Redefine content to ensure relevance:

   a) Develop competency based education, cross referenced with high school requirements.
      - Determination of course competencies
      - Obtain assistance from business and industry

   b) Identify and define stakeholders (users) and, with them, examine the purpose and relationship of education.

   c) Work with business and industry to identify their major retraining requirements and use basic educational curriculum to close gaps.

   d) Develop a program for training school district personnel in the visioning and consensus process to permit localized continuation of Roundtable thrust or site based management.

   e) Based on new understandings of relevance and usability, increase the requirements for graduation.

3. Improve recognition and reward systems:

   a) Provide empowerment for teachers and develop rewards more in line with their educational activities (as opposed to time in service and administrative activities).

   b) Increase rewards for students, using such means as:
      - Academic school letters (like sports letters)
      - Special achievment recognition for graduates
      - Help the students develop concepts of self approval and inner direction to fuel their own reward system

   c) Increase the enrichment opportunities and activities for both students and faculty.

POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS

The same types as were identified for Groups I to III would apply here, also.

We are only partly through this planning and champion identification exercise. We need to review and revalidate the desired behaviors and improve the relevance and specificity of even the generic plans which might be employed to achieve that behavior.

Then, we need to spend more quality time identifying the type(s) of individuals who would make effective champions for these plans and programs.

As we improve the understanding of the types of generic plans which would achieve the behavior, we should find that it is easier to be more specific about the champions who would be likely to come up with and accomplish the final plans and programs.

Then comes the real work. We have to consense on a strategy for recruiting those champions and persuading them to make the causes and plans their own.

Until we complete that final step, we have not really accomplished anything of significant impact.

As always, this report concludes with a call to join our Roundtable in the next step of our quest - this time, with the purpose of taking our act from the intellectual discussion arena to the sands of the arena of real accomplishment.